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# Research into the National Citizens Service pilot (Autumn, 2014) in Wales

March 2016

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## **Glossary**

Acronym/Key word	Definition
NCS	National Citizen Service

## **1. Introduction**

- 1.1 The National Citizen Service (NCS) is a UK Government-backed initiative that brings together young people aged 15 to 17 from different backgrounds to help them develop greater confidence, self-awareness and responsibility, with a view to creating a more cohesive, responsible and engaged society. It was piloted in Wales in the autumn of 2014.
- 1.2 Commissioning and monitoring the delivery of the NCS pilot in Wales is the responsibility of the Department for Communities and Tackling Poverty in the Welsh Government. As part of the process of monitoring the NCS pilot a small-scale research on the NCS pilot was commissioned by the Department. The Internal Research Programme within the Social Research Division, Knowledge and Analytical Services was commissioned to undertake the Welsh Government evaluation. The remit of the Internal Research Programme is to provide research support across policy areas, and develop and deliver small-scale research projects.
- 1.3 The remit of the research focussed on collecting the views of key stakeholders in youth work and volunteering in Wales and the views of teachers whose pupils participated in the pilot. The Welsh Government research report provides background information and the Welsh context for the National Citizen Service pilot in Wales (2014), a summary of past and present evaluations of UK NCS and the results and analysis from the internally commissioned research (stakeholders views).

## **2. Methodology and limitations of the study**

- 2.1 A small-scale research project was commissioned to investigate the views of key Welsh stakeholders on the design and implementation of the NCS pilot. While the experiences and outcomes for participants have been documented by annual evaluations of the UK NCS programme, and some evaluations have included qualitative evidence from interviews with parents and teachers, the views of stakeholders also involved in the delivery of youth work and volunteering have not hitherto been collected. Given the time and resource constraints (to undertake a full-scale evaluation of the Wales NCS pilot) and the importance of the Third Sector in Wales in delivering youth services, it was decided that the views of stakeholders were needed to fill the gap in understanding about the delivery and impact of NCS.
- 2.2 The views of stakeholders are particularly important to inform the possible avenues for the continuation of an NCS like programme in Wales as the landscape within which it would sit differs in Wales. The Cabinet Office specification for the contract to deliver the NCS pilot in Wales stated that any delivery must take into account and engage with the organisations operating in the youth work and volunteering voluntary sector in Wales. This research investigates to what extent that did happen.
- 2.3 Semi-structured interviews with 14 stakeholders (12 external stakeholders, 2 internal Welsh Government stakeholders, 70% of those contacted) were undertaken (13 telephone interviews, one face to face interview) in March and early April 2015 (a period concurrent with the post-participation survey undertaken by Ipsos MORI) to investigate the views and perceptions of stakeholders on the NCS pilot in Wales. The following themes were explored during the interviews:
- The levels of awareness of and engagement with the NCS pilot.
  - The nature of engagement with the NCS pilot and whether this was sufficient.

- Whether the NCS pilot had achieved its original aims and objectives.
- Overall impressions of the NCS programme.
- The future role of NCS in Wales.
- The future role of their organisation in NCS if it were to continue in Wales.
- Lessons learned from the NCS pilot and that can be learned from the current landscape in Wales.
- The integration of NCS with youth education and development and progression goals in Wales.
- Points of similarity/contention between their organisation and the NCS.

- 2.4 The interviews were recorded and transcribed verbatim, then analysed using MAXQDA software to identify common themes. The results of this analysis were consolidated and have been presented anonymously; no individual or organisation can be identified by the information presented in this report.
- 2.5 A survey of teachers whose students participated in the NCS pilot in Wales was also undertaken as part of this research. Due to time constraints an online-survey methodology was selected. The survey was sent to main contacts at schools and colleges provided by Engage4Life (the delivery agency). Fifteen surveys were sent, and recipients were asked to cascade the survey to colleagues who had contact with students who had attended the NCS pilot in Wales. Due to the small nature of the original population the data is not robust, but is presented here to offer a snapshot of the views of those supporting young people attending NCS on its delivery, design and benefits for young people. The results of the survey are described in this report.
- 2.6 Due to the small-scale nature of the research and limited resources participant data was not collected. However, the UK Cabinet Office has commissioned evaluation of NCS since the first pilot in 2011 and

in each subsequent year. A summary of participant experiences and outcomes from the 2012 and 2013 each of these evaluations (excluding the 2011 pilot) is provided within this report. Additional data from the 2014 evaluation (Ipsos MORI) is not included in this report as it has not yet been published. The 2014 evaluation also included the participants of the Welsh pilot. Due to the very small sample that was returned, this data is not sufficiently robust to be included in this report.

2.7 During interviews with stakeholders, conducted as part of the Welsh Government commissioned research, it was acknowledged that while some data are collected on the outcomes of youth work and volunteering programmes for young people in Wales there is a need for more longitudinal evidence. Several NCS evaluations have now been conducted and there is a focus on the collection of data over time as the programme continues; however there is currently a lack of evidence for the long-term outcomes for young people. A logic model was developed as part of the scoping phase for the first NCS evaluation. The logic model sets out how NCS is intended to work by identifying the inputs, activities, change mechanisms and outcomes of the programme and the relationships between the different elements of the programme.

2.8 The programme logic model provided a frame of reference for measuring the success of the programme. Outcomes of the programme were expected to be in four key areas - social mixing, transition to adulthood, teamwork, communication and leadership skills and community involvement; these were used in subsequent evaluations. However, the detail underlying the logic model was contained in an unpublished technical report and therefore the theory of change behind the logic model was not available for this report. Subsequent evaluations make no further reference to this logic model.

2.9 The Welsh Government commissioned research cannot fill the gap in the measurement of long-term outcomes and the articulation of a theory of change for young people partaking in youth work and



volunteering programmes, but it does highlight that a lack of longitudinal research on outcomes is a common concern amongst youth work and volunteering organisations in Wales and is a consideration for future research and evaluation.

- 2.10 Additional data have been collected on the Welsh pilot through an in-depth study conducted by Swansea University (unpublished) and are incorporated throughout this report. The Institute of Life Science at Swansea University Medical School was engaged by the NCS Provider, Engage4Life, to undertake an independent review to support evaluation of the pilot by all stakeholders including Welsh Government and UK Government Cabinet Office. The scope of the Swansea University evaluation was to determine quality and effectiveness of delivery, together with integration with the Welsh landscape. The evaluation had three key aims:
- The evaluation sought to determine how the NCS pilot in Wales was delivered through a consideration of the adherence with established NCS practice. It also investigated marketing and recruitment practices, the social mix achieved, and the quality of staffing, venues and experiences.
  - The second aim was to assess the quality of participant experience. Previous evaluations have examined the effectiveness of the NCS programme in delivering outcomes against the targeted Outcomes for Social Mixing, Transition to adulthood, Teamwork communication & leadership, and Community Involvement through surveys of participants, family and teachers. The aim of this evaluation has been to provide further insight into each outcome area to understand the participant experience and the contribution of the NCS initiative.
  - The third aim of the evaluation was to test the integration of the NCS Wales Pilot within the Welsh context (see section 3.1). This data includes a process evaluation of the Wales NCS Pilot, participant data, and data from interviews with stakeholders.

- 2.11 A mixed-method approach combining qualitative and quantitative research tools was developed. Integration with other initiatives was explored through interviews with participants' communities and broader stakeholders. Quantitative and qualitative data collection amongst participants (38 interviews carried out, representing a response rate of 10%) was undertaken by the research team and Engage4Life staff (who were trained to do so).

### **3. The National Citizen Service (NCS)**

#### **Background and Welsh context**

- 3.1 National Citizen Service (NCS) is a UK Government-backed initiative that brings together young people aged 15 to 17 from different backgrounds to help them develop greater confidence, self-awareness and responsibility, with a view to creating a more cohesive, responsible and engaged society. The NCS programme takes place over several weeks - outside of school time - in spring, summer and autumn. Young people who take part can expect to work in a team of 12 to 15 young people from different backgrounds; face challenging activities which take them out of their comfort zone; live and work with their team during residential weeks, both away from and within their local area; and get involved in their local community. The NCS programme is illustrated by figure 1.
- 3.2 Since November 2013, the NCS has been managed in England by the NCS Trust, a community interest company established by the UK Government to shape, champion and support NCS. Before this date, NCS was managed by the Cabinet Office.

## NCS Ethos

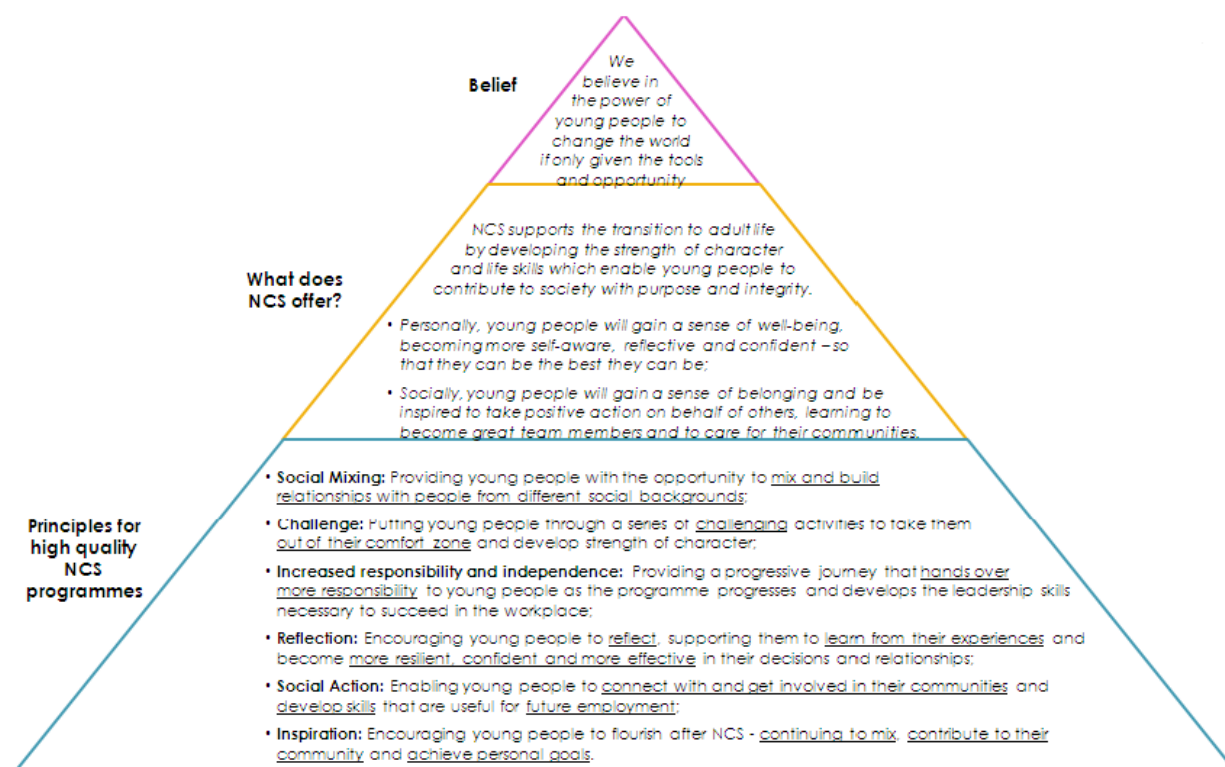


Figure 1: The NCS Ethos (adapted from NCS Wales Pilot Cabinet Office specification)

- 3.3 The Office for Civil Society (responsibility for work with charities, social enterprises and voluntary organisations in England) in the Cabinet Office proposed a pilot for the delivery of National Citizen Service in Wales to occur in 2014. The Welsh Government worked with Cabinet Office on the arrangements. After a process of bidding for the contract to deliver the NCS pilot in Wales, the contract was awarded to Engage4Life and the Welsh NCS pilot ran in autumn 2014.
- 3.4 The Welsh Government has devolved responsibility for Education, Youth Work, social enterprises and Volunteering (but not charity regulation) in Wales. Its Third Sector Scheme underpins and guides its ongoing relationship with the Community Organisations, social enterprises and the Voluntary Sector, collectively referred to as the “Third Sector” in Wales.
- 3.5 The Department for Communities and Tackling Poverty is the lead Welsh Government Department with overall responsibility for tackling

poverty, promoting community resilience, promoting the rights and participation of children and young people, promoting equality and inclusion, and supporting the development of the Third Sector and enhancing the Sector's strategic relationship with both the UK and Welsh Government.

- 3.6 The pilot scheme proposed was funded by the Cabinet Office, with a maximum of £300,000 funding set aside. The minimum cost per participant was set at £1,000 and unlike in England, where there is a charge of up to £50 to take part, the Welsh pilot did not include a charge for participants.
- 3.7 The Cabinet Office pilot tender specification noted that Applicants needed to be able to demonstrate a sound knowledge of the socio-economic characteristics of Wales, the youth sector, educational and volunteering landscape of Wales and be able to demonstrate a strong partnership approach, making use of, and working with public, private and Third Sector organisations in Wales to deliver the desired programme. Applicants would be expected to forge strong links with the Welsh Government programmes including Communities First, GwirVol and the Welsh Baccalaureate. The active involvement of a number of Communities First Clusters in the development and delivery of NCS in Wales was considered particularly important.

*“The Welsh Government Communities First Lead Delivery Bodies, GwirVol Programme and engagement with local Third Sector organisations are viewed as an essential element of delivering the desired Pilot and Applicants must be mindful of this”.*

- 3.8 To ensure consistency the successful provider was required to:
- Comply with existing and future Intellectual Property of the programme;
  - Use the best practice from the NCS reference guide as a basis for programme content;

- Engage with Welsh Government programmes including those designed to promote youth action, education and volunteering; and
- Comply with existing and future brand guidelines from the NCS Trust.

3.9 The NCS programme involves a number of phases, including: a residential element; getting to know the community; developing personal and social skills; and the design and implementation of community-based social action projects. The Cabinet Office tender document specified:

*“[it] is essential the social mix of the programme gets the right balance between ensuring a measurable geographical, economic and social mix of participants. Applicants are asked to consider a mix of urban and rural areas, town and country areas and smaller villages. The successful Applicant will deliver a NCS scheme selected from the areas outlined in Appendix B (note, these areas cover all of Wales). It is not expected that all of the areas will be covered in this Pilot”.*

3.10 The recruitment of young people to NCS in Wales was the responsibility of the delivery organisation. The Cabinet Office tender specification noted that applicants should demonstrate a strong working relationship with organisations working with young people in Wales in order to achieve successful recruitment. These included (but were not restricted to): academies/schools, colleges; employers; Local Authorities, specifically Youth Offending Teams, youth services and social care services; Voluntary and community groups; Local health services; Voluntary and community sector and specialist organisations; Local Partnership arrangements, including Local Enterprise Partnerships where appropriate; Welsh Communities First Clusters and their Lead Delivery Bodies in Wales; Jobcentre Plus; Police services; National organisations that support local activity. Applicants were strongly encouraged to engage with County

Voluntary Councils and Volunteer Centres within Wales as an additional recruitment channel.

- 3.11 The Welsh Government supports a number of its own programmes designed to promote youth engagement and voluntary action in Wales. It was expected that the NCS pilot for Wales was integrated and worked alongside the Welsh Government's programmes where possible. An overview of these programmes is presented here.

### **Youth Engagement and Progression Framework**

- 3.12 On the 1st October 2013 the Welsh Government published the Youth Engagement and Progression Framework and an implementation plan for its delivery. The Framework has six key elements:

- Identifying young people most at risk of disengagement.
- Better brokerage and coordination of support.
- Stronger tracking and transitions of young people through the system.
- Ensuring provision meets the needs of young people.
- Strengthening employability skills and opportunities for employment.
- Greater accountability for better outcomes for young people.

- 3.13 The Framework requires an integrated approach from all organisations involved in delivering activity for young people, focussing on the needs of the individual. Local Authorities are charged with providing the support young people need to aid their progression through education and training into employment. This is being delivered through a systems based approach to early identification of need, co-ordinated brokerage of support and tracking of the young person's progress.

- 3.14 At the heart of the Framework there are two new actions, the first is the offer of a lead worker within a relevant organisation who can provide continuity of support and contact for the most at risk young people.
- 3.15 The second is the development of a proactive offer of a Youth Guarantee. This is the offer, acceptance and commencement of a suitable place in education or training for a young person making the first time transition from compulsory education at age 16. The Welsh Government believe this will provide a clear progression route for all young people, linked to effective information, advice and guidance to help them make a more informed choice, and support their progression post 16.
- 3.16 Each local authority has put in place an Engagement and Progression Co-ordinator (EPC). The EPC plays a critical role in implementing the Youth Engagement and Progression Framework. They work closely with Careers Wales to provide the operational leadership needed to identify the level of risk of young people and the specific support needed to help them make a positive progression.
- 3.17 The Framework provides the structure to help local authorities to establish whether local and national provision is delivering effective outcomes and value for money through the measurement of reductions in numbers of young people Not in Education Employment or Training (NEET) at a local level. There is no additional cost to implementing the Framework; it is intended to help local authorities refocus their existing expenditure as a result of mapping provision to identify potential gaps, recognise any unmet provision need and importantly removing any duplication and overlaps in provision.
- 3.18 Each local authority has a Welsh Government lead contact who works closely with them to support their implementation of the framework. We also set up Regional Working Groups which include Local Authorities and representation from Careers Wales, Further Education, Work Based Learning, National Training Federation



Wales, Regional Education Consortia schools and the Third Sector. The workshops are themed around the different areas of the framework in order to share experiences, highlight good practice and to help Welsh Government develop any further guidance required.

## **National Youth Work Strategy for Wales**

- 3.19 The National Youth Work Strategy for Wales (2014-2018) was launched on the 20<sup>th</sup> February, 2014. The strategy recognises the value and role of open-access youth work provision; promotes a stronger connection between youth work provision and formal education; identifies the need for closer working between statutory and voluntary youth work organisations; and identifies the need to significantly strengthen the evidence base on the impact of youth work across Wales. The Welsh Government, national and local voluntary organisations, as well as Local Authorities, will need to work together to successfully implement the identified actions and drive youth work forward.

## **Welsh Baccalaureate**

- 3.20 National Citizen Service (NCS) seeks to introduce young people to the concept of civic responsibility as they make the transition into adulthood. NCS supports young people to develop the skills and attitudes they need to get more engaged with their communities and become active and responsible citizens.
- 3.21 The key aims of NCS align well with the current Welsh Baccalaureate (Welsh Bacc). Community participation is a compulsory element of the Core of the Welsh Baccalaureate at all three levels. Sitting within the Personal and Social Education component of the Welsh Bacc's Core, Community Participation aims to:

- develop awareness of what it means to be an active and responsible citizen through helping others;
- provide opportunities for candidates to involve themselves in working in active community participation, it cannot be desk based;
- relate to the real world and the wider community, outside the classroom; and
- encourage candidates to work in groups.

3.22 Following the Review of Qualifications in Wales, the Welsh Bacc is being revised to make the model more rigorous. The revised model is due for first teaching in September 2015.

3.23 A high level model has been agreed by the Minister for Education and Skills. It retains, at all levels, a compulsory community participation element - the strengthened and renamed Community Challenge. Learners will be expected to identify and develop opportunities in the local or wider community and actively participate to support improvement. This may be a centre led activity or involve third sector organisations to come into centres to help deliver the challenge and provide feedback to learners on outcomes.

3.24 Currently the Welsh Bacc is not compulsory and approximately 60% of learners aged 16-19 and half of Key Stage 4 learners now follow Welsh Baccalaureate courses. However, in line with the recommendations from the Review of Qualifications, Welsh Government will encourage universal take up of the revised, more rigorous Welsh Baccalaureate that will be implemented from September 2015.

3.25 The revised Welsh Bacc, through the Skills Challenge Certificate, will have a clear focus on the following skills:

- Numeracy

- Literacy
- Digital Literacy
- Critical Thinking and Problem Solving
- Planning and Organisation
- Creativity and Innovation
- Personal Effectiveness

3.26 These skills will be developed, applied and assessed through the completion of four 'Challenges' and through completion of the new GCSEs in English/Welsh and Maths/Numeracy. The four Challenges are:

- The Individual Project Challenge
- Global Citizenship Challenge
- Enterprise and Employability Challenge
- Community Challenge

## **Youth work and volunteering in Wales**

### *GwirVol partnership*

3.27 GwirVol is a partnership between the Voluntary, Community, Public and Private sectors and led by the views of young people in Wales. The Partnership exists to take forward the recommendations of the Russell Commission . The recommendations are designed to provide a framework to bring about a step change in the numbers and diversity of young volunteers and to give them more and better quality volunteering opportunities.

3.28 The aim of the Partnership is:

- to increase the current percentage of young people between the ages of 16 -25 who want to volunteer;

- to increase the scope of volunteering opportunities, to include those young people who experience barriers, in terms of disadvantage, ability, and ethnicity;
- to celebrate the involvement of young people, through increased recognition and awards; and
- to ensure that every volunteering opportunity represents a high quality positive experience.

3.29 GwirVol looks to support young people to get involved in volunteering through a number of ways.

3.30 Youth Volunteering Advisors: There are 22 part-time GwirVol Youth Volunteering Advisors (YVA's) that are based in the volunteer centres around Wales. The YVAs are there to offer advice and information about how become a volunteer. They are here to talk to about what you want to do and what you want to get from your experience. They have a range of volunteering opportunities available that you can look at and they can get you in touch with the right organisation for you. Youth volunteering advisors are also local delivery partners for Millennium Volunteers.

3.31 Millennium Volunteers Award: Millennium Volunteers (MV) is an award programme supporting young people to make a commitment to volunteer for 200 hours in their community. It encourages 14-25 year olds to build on existing skills and interests and to gain new experiences by giving their time to worthwhile and well-organised volunteering activities. Their efforts are recognised through a 50 and 100 hour Certificate and 200 hour Award of Excellence signed by the First Minister of the Welsh Assembly Government.

3.32 GwirVol's You Give You Get: GwirVol's You Give You Get is a publication detailing a number of recognition and award programmes in Wales that young volunteers could be eligible to take part in.

3.33 Youth led grants: In each county in Wales, Youth Volunteering Advisors have supported the set up of Local Youth Led Grant Panel's.

These are groups of young people from the local area who are allocated up to £4,000 to distribute through grants to local youth led volunteering activities. Every area is led by the ideas and needs of young people and the panels themselves decide on the criteria for the grants, the priority groups and the application process but they are all aimed to develop youth volunteering and seek applications from projects lead by young people themselves.

#### *The Volunteering in Wales Fund*

- 3.34 The Volunteering in Wales Fund is a scheme funded by the Welsh Government to promote Volunteering in Wales. The Fund is administered by Wales Council for Voluntary Action (WCVA).
- 3.35 The aim of the Volunteering in Wales Fund (VWF) is to;
- Support formal volunteering projects that aim to recruit, support, train and place new volunteers.
  - Encourage good practice in volunteering; and
  - Support the development of volunteering in under-developed areas such as underrepresented groups, areas with less opportunities or types of volunteering opportunities.
- 3.36 Grants of up to £25,000 are available which can assist in the costs of a volunteer coordinator, volunteer training and travelling expenses and some capital items.

#### *Council for Wales of Voluntary Youth Services (CWVYS)*

- 3.37 CWVYS (the Council for Wales of Voluntary Youth Services) is the independent representative body for the voluntary youth work sector in Wales. The aims are to represent, support and give a collective voice to its membership of national and local organisations in their work with over 250,000 young people in Wales. CWVYS works in partnership with agencies promoting good youth work practice.

3.38 As part of work supporting the implementation of the Youth Engagement and Progression Framework CWVYS were appointed to undertake a project to:

- identify and clarify the role and responsibilities of the voluntary youth work sector in the implementation of the youth engagement and progression framework;
- identify sustainable structures of partnership working between the voluntary youth work sector and local authorities;
- identify and disseminate effective practice to better support a delivery system centred on the needs of young people;
- identify and address gaps in provision specifically tier 1 and 2 of the youth engagement and progression model and consider the need for development of a formal volunteering offer; and
- identify and deliver any other resources needed to support voluntary youth work sector organisations, workers and committees to undertake their role within the framework (including resources aimed at the local authority).

#### *Wales Council for Voluntary Action*

3.39 Wales Council for Voluntary Action represents, campaigns for, supports and develops voluntary organisations, community action and volunteering in Wales. WCVA represents the sector at UK and national level, and together with a range of specialist agencies, county voluntary councils, volunteer centres and other development agencies, provides a support structure for the third sector in Wales. WCVA have over 3,000 members, and are in touch with many more organisations through a wide range of national and local networks.

#### **4. Delivery of the Welsh NCS pilot – Engage4Life**

- 4.1 This section provides a summary of the delivery of the Welsh NCS pilot as described in the Engage4Life NCS Wales Pilot Project Autumn 2014 Evaluation Report. In 2011 the Cabinet Office instigated a pilot project to develop the framework and processes for the National Citizen Service (NCS). Engage4Life played an active role as one of the first tranche of NCS delivery partners during the NCS pilot stage. The organisation worked closely with the Cabinet Office and key stakeholders both nationally and locally to help shape the framework, processes and content for the full National Citizen Service programme that launched in 2013.
- 4.2 Engage4Life has grown rapidly during these years to keep pace with the ever-expanding demand for the National Citizen Service, and have delivered the experience to over 5,000 young people across the Midlands, West and South-West of England.
- 4.3 After a process of bidding for the contract to deliver the NCS pilot in Wales, the contract was awarded to Engage4Life and the Welsh NCS pilot ran in autumn 2014.
- 4.4 Engage4life had 4 years of learning and experience of NCS and also possessed a Welsh connection rooted in youth engagement, education and training in Wales. This allowed them to utilise the original model, whilst also attempting to develop the model and shape it to the Welsh context and setting. Three hundred and sixty three young people participated in the Welsh NCS Pilot with additional funding provided to accommodate the extra numbers.
- 4.5 The scope of the pilot was reduced from pan-Wales to focus on the 4 regions of Cardiff and the Vale of Glamorgan, Carmarthen, Rhondda Cynon Taff (RCT) and Swansea and the Swansea valley. Engage4Life's own evaluation report that the main factors for this were:

- The short lead-in between pilot award and programme delivery made it necessary to focus resource and time in key regions to ensure that a high-quality NCS experience was delivered.
- Initial plans to use a sub-contracted provider in North Wales could not be realised due to: the time required to instigate the partnership, complete due diligence, and to train their staff so that a high-quality, safe and compliant experience could be ensured.
- During the pilot period there was a window of 4 weeks in which young people were in schools as the majority of the period was over the summer holiday break. In order to access the necessary number of schools to deliver recruitment events whilst fitting in around the schools needs and timetabling in the busy September term necessitated limiting the scope of the geographical area.

4.6 Engage4Life recruited an experienced partnerships manager with existing networks in the education sector in Wales. This gave access to the Headteachers forums in Swansea, Cardiff and RCT, allowing access to strategically selected Headteachers whose buy-in gave the penetration needed in the short 4 week window the pilot allowed for recruitment.

*“Already having this buy in from schools meant that the logical approach was to focus on these as our main recruitment source, an approach which we know from experience is very successful, and also scalable. Utilising a wide range of schools which represented a fair cross-section of the Welsh demographic allowed us to ensure that the programme was promoted to young people from a range of backgrounds, in keeping with the NCS core ethos. The range of schools we worked with included high achieving schools such as Olchfa in Swansea. Fitzalan High in Cardiff is Wales’ most multi-cultural school. Barry Boys and Pentrehafod Community School are examples from Community First areas; and Coleg Sir Gar is a Welsh language school.....We identified a number of organisations within Wales who would*



*be able to provide referrals of numbers of young people from specific categories, such as:*

- *The Urdd – Welsh speakers*
- *Communities First – young people from deprived backgrounds*
- *SEN schools – young people with disabilities”.*

*The short duration of the pilot project meant that we did not have the time to set up the partnerships with all of these organisations, and allow them time to get the internal processes in place following the summer holiday season. If we were to deliver a full version of the programme then we would build on the groundwork already made to do so. An example of the beginnings of such a relationship is the work we did with Communities First in RCT, who supplied 32 young people for the programme”.* Engage4Life NCS Wales Pilot Project, Autumn 2014, Evaluation Report

- 4.7 The senior leadership team at Engage4Life worked with four experienced programme managers from England to produce the curriculum and a detailed project action plan for delivery.
- 4.8 The delivery model for NCS Wales, based on past experience, was a Team Leader for each team supported by two Assistants, made up from volunteers and some paid members of staff. During the away residential phase there was an additional member of staff per team provided by the activity centre, who had all been through the NCS ethos training. This provided a staff ratio of 4:15 during the away residential, and 3:15 for the remainder of the programme.

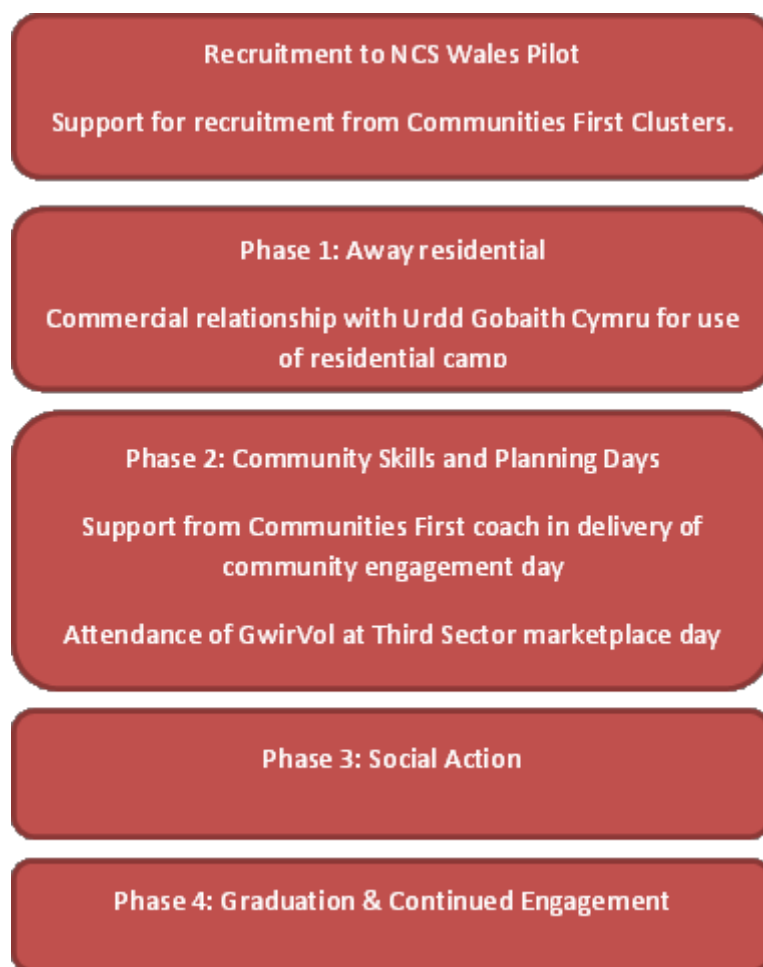


Figure 2: Phases of NCS delivery and involvement of Welsh youth engagement and volunteering organisations

4.9 Engage4Life utilised their experience of delivering the NCS programme in England to plan the project, following the four core phases outlined by the NCS contract:

#### 4.10 Phase 1: Away Residential

The away residential phase is where the participants break down barriers, form new friendships, learn leadership and team-working skills whilst developing their confidence. Utilising their existing partnership with the Urdd, their activity centre at Llangrannog was utilised for phase 1 of delivery. Having been a partner in their English delivery, the staff at Llangrannog had been through the NCS ethos training.

#### 4.11 Phase 2: Community Skills and Planning Days

##### Day 1: Community Engagement

The focus of the day was Community Engagement: understanding the importance of engaging with the community, and developing a wider understanding of the people within it. The participants from Carmarthen and Swansea were brought to the Liberty Stadium for this part of delivery. Those from Cardiff and RCT were taken to the Wales Millennium Centre.

Engage4Life brought in a number of speakers to talk to participants about their roles, and how they contributed to the wider community. These speakers included politicians, local business owners, PCSOs, Premier League footballers, International rugby stars and Olympians.

Engage4Life then utilised a task they've developed that encourages engagement with a full cross-section of the general public, called community bingo. This sees the participants speaking to people about how they feel about the community, what the issues are as they see them, and what they'd like to change.

Phase 2 was all about delivering new experiences, for example Engage4Life arranged for each participant to have their first driving lesson.

##### Day 2: NCS Conference

Developing useful life skills is a key element of this phase of the programme, and one which many will need in later life is attending conferences. Engage4Life therefore piloted the first NCS conference, taking the participants out of their comfort zones, challenging them, and developing an understanding of how to behave in such an environment. To ensure that the event was inspiring, Engage4Life used the Celtic Manor Resort in Newport, one of the leading venues in the world.

Engage4Life aimed to secure world class speakers to really motivate and inspire the young people and also wanted to maintain the Welsh

context of the programme, so focussed on people from Wales who had become a great success, having faced adversity in early life. Engage4Life secured Professor Meirion Thomas, a world leading cancer surgeon, and Professor Marc Clement, a world leading physicist, and expert in laser technology. To complement them they also had young entrepreneur, Joe Hodges, who spoke about building a business from an idea which was based upon helping those with disabilities.

### Day 3: Inspiration Day

Engage4Life delivered an Inspiration Day, using the Millennium Stadium. There was a focus on Health & Wellbeing, with Communities First running a series of workshops for the young people focussing on healthy living, and He4l (set up by a group of National Citizen Service graduates) running workshops on good mental health. Through a Third Sector Marketplace participants also had the opportunity to engage with a range of organisations, find out what they do, and how they could be involved to make a difference. Organisations included GwirVol, Macmillan and Stop Smoking, with MacMillan seeing a number of teams deciding to raise money for their cause as their social action projects.

Further workshops were run focusing on inspiring talent in the young people, including one by Music Klub teaching the participants how to write and produce music.

A range of motivational speakers delivered speeches- welsh Rugby legends Phil Davies and Clive Rowlands and film director John Michelle.

The day finished with a celebration event for the young people to recognise what they'd achieved so far, and get them excited about the prospect of making a difference in their communities. The music was supplied by participants who had shown a talent for music over the course of the programme, and some talented graduates from the English programme who were brought down to be a part of the day.

#### 4.12 Phase 3: Social Action

This is the part of the programme where the young people have the opportunity to give something back to their communities, and make a real difference to a cause which matters to them. Phase 3 began with delivery staff providing an initial workshop on all the key aspects of running a social action project.

Examples of social action projects during the NCS Wales Pilot 2014 include:

- One of the groups from Carmarthen wanted to run a Welsh-medium social action project, in which they sought to raise awareness of Welsh language and culture. To do so they delivered a project called Llais the Voice. The focus of the project was an event where people were invited to learn more about Welsh language and culture at Parc y Scarletts in Llanelli. To raise awareness of this the team managed to get invited onto the popular TV programme Heno on S4C to talk about the NCS, and the event. The event featured Welsh food and Welsh language music and poetry.
- Another team from Cardiff wanted to raise funds for Children's Cancer Charity Latch, and Cardiff Mind, and decided to put on a Mardi Gras event at the Cardiff Hilton. A key part of the event was a fashion show, and the team managed to engage Matalan to supply all of the clothes for this free of charge, which was a fantastic achievement. The event raised almost £500 for the chosen causes.

#### 4.13 Phase 4: Graduation & Continued Engagement

The National Waterfront Museum in Swansea was chosen for the NCS Wales Graduation. One large celebration event for all participants on the NCS Wales pilot was conducted. Engage4Life felt that this gave more of a feeling of being part of a movement, and part of a larger community. It was also more cost effective. Transport was

provided to get to and from the venue to ensure that all of the participants were able to attend.

A key element was celebrating the achievements of the participants. Engage4Life utilised the large video wall to show a series of images from throughout the programme, to show the young people how far they'd come, and what they'd achieved. A more focused presentation was given during the event to highlight the achievements of each team's social action successes, as they then came up onto the stage to collect their certificates.

Engage4Life view the celebration event as the participant's entry point into further volunteering, with graduate opportunities actively promoted, both with Engage4Life and externally with their partners. This is achieved through an opportunities wall at the event, and the ability to sign up whilst on site. The young people are also directed to the Graduates section of their website to participate in their NCS+ programme. Through their NCS+ Graduate programme Engage4Life then offer a range of opportunities for graduates to stay involved with social action.

- 4.14 The Swansea University evaluation (unpublished) found that the programme as delivered maps correctly against the Model defined in the NCS Wales Pilot Specification, with each of the Phases undertaken delivering the prescribed activities. However, as described in detail in section 5 (the Welsh Government research) stakeholders felt that the way the NCS pilot was delivered in Wales did not meet the original criteria set out in the Cabinet Office specification. NCS Trust representatives attended the Programme during its delivery, engaging with participants, partner organisations and the Provider. Their feedback was very positive, aligning well with the positive experiences of previous programmes. Further interviews with senior NCS Trust representatives stressed the desire and ongoing efforts for ever-closer integration with UK-wide initiatives such as the Duke of Edinburgh Award and Prince's Trust, which would be well

complemented by collaboration with Welsh initiatives including those discussed in section 3.

## 5. Findings

- 5.1 The results from the analysis of the interviews with stakeholders are presented in the following section. While the sample is small, it was purposively sampled to ensure that the research encompassed the views of high-level representatives in many of the key youth work and volunteering organisations working across Wales.
- 5.2 To provide background context to the environment in which the sample stakeholders are operating respondents were asked what challenges their organisations currently faced. Respondents largely talked about their own organisation's challenges, but several organisations also spoke on behalf of their members. Three key challenges emerged repeatedly- funding, capacity and Local Authority re-organisation. These three challenges are all inter-linked and are confounded by what one organisation described as a 'perfect storm' of rising demand and ever decreasing resources. Shrinking funding and resources are threatening the continued delivery of services and programmes and the ability to forward-plan. Even where funding is relatively stable, and a number of organisations pointed out that they were "very lucky to be supported by the Welsh Government", capacity to deliver is an issue for many organisations, or organisations that they work with in partnership. Funding cuts to Local Authorities place extra pressure on the Third Sector and recent uncertainty about Local Authority re-organisation in Wales has added an extra layer of concern about funding availability and distribution and the effects it will have on local authority youth services provision.

*"We had an independent evaluation.....in 2010, they basically said that funding cuts had risked a number of our interventions becoming tokenistic, and whilst that hasn't as yet happened, we do feel that we're very much in danger of that with further funding cuts. It does stifle some of the forward thinking that you have, that some of the larger projects, the more in-depth, individual work that you'd like to do with the harder to reach young people, it's about resource and funding".*



## **Levels of engagement with NCS**

- 5.3 The interviews revealed that levels of engagement with and awareness of NCS varied amongst those interviewed on a spectrum from those that had been aware of NCS since early in the discussions about piloting it in Wales to those that had only become aware shortly before or at the time of it's delivery. Only three of the stakeholder organisations were actively involved in the delivery of NCS. Stakeholders did not feel that they had been sufficiently engaged.**
- 5.4 Those stakeholders that were invited to participate in the evaluation were those that may have had some involvement with the NCS in Wales in their capacity as community support, youth work and volunteering organisations in Wales. A number of the organisations interviewed are members of the GwirVol partnership. Several internal stakeholders from the Welsh Government were also interviewed. Stakeholders were asked to discuss their levels of awareness of and engagement with the National Citizen Service pilot in Wales. The Cabinet Office tender specification for the contract to run NCS in Wales clearly stated that Applicants needed to be able to demonstrate a sound knowledge of the socio-economic characteristics of Wales, the youth sector, educational and volunteering landscape of Wales and be able to demonstrate a strong partnership approach, making use of, and working with public, private and Third Sector organisations in Wales to deliver the desired programme. Applicants would be expected to forge strong links with the Welsh Government programmes including Communities First, GwirVol and the Welsh Baccalaureate. Interviewing a wide range of those organisations as part of this evaluation demonstrated to what extent this had happened and therefore how successfully key organisations in Wales had been involved in the process by the agency awarded the contract to deliver the NCS pilot in Wales.
- 5.5 Levels of engagement with and awareness of NCS varied amongst those interviewed on a spectrum from those that had been aware of

NCS since early in the process of the discussion of piloting it in Wales to those that had only become aware shortly before or at the time of its delivery. A number of GwirVol partnership members had been engaged in an unsuccessful consortium bid for the delivery contract, and therefore had higher levels of awareness and understanding of the pilot than others. Levels of awareness of NCS in Wales were particularly low amongst the County Voluntary Councils. Of six CVCs invited to participate in the evaluation, four declined (two stating explicitly that they did not know anything about NCS). The two that were interviewed had limited awareness and no engagement with the pilot.

*“We found out that there was an event in ..... the day after it had taken place, because one of the participants in it rang us the following day and said that they were surprised that we weren’t there, we had been left off the mailing list. I contacted the person who I got as an organising contact and said that we were surprised that as a volunteering service that we hadn’t been informed or invited ..... They apologised and just said they didn’t have our details and didn’t quite understand how things worked, and said they would engage with us later on, but in fact that didn’t happen”.*

- 5.6 Of the 14 stakeholders interviewed, only 3 were actively involved in the delivery of NCS either through a commercial relationship or the direct involvement of youth workers.
- 5.7 A key theme that emerged around engagement and awareness of the NCS pilot in Wales was a feeling of not being ‘sufficiently’ engaged. There was a certain amount of disappointment and frustration that after being involved in discussions about the NCS Wales pilot from the beginning the actual engagement with the pilot once it was delivered was limited or non-existent. A clear message was that these organisations very much wanted to be involved in supporting the NCS pilot in Wales in a number of positive ways- be it through recruitment, signposting, getting involved in the community participation element or attending events- but there were limited opportunities to do so. This resulted in frustration that the pilot did not capitalise on the capacity to

support that exists within Wales. A number of interviewees felt that they were not given enough time to engage effectively with the project, however were understanding of the fact that the speed of implementation had been problematic in allowing sufficient cross-Wales engagement to take place. It was felt that the delivery organisation, Engage4Life did not match up to their original aspirations to engage with external partners. The Swansea University evaluation (unpublished) also found that the requirements relating to integration with key Welsh Government initiatives were challenging, and found this to be due to the timescales involved.

*“In terms of the organisation and their delivery of the programme, that I think didn’t quite meet the aspirations that the delivery organisations had to engage with external partners”.*

*“I think it would’ve been very beneficial for Engage4Life to have spent some time when they got the agreement to make contact with some of the existing bodies and build bridges and build up the PR around what needed to be achieved. What I was expecting was, because we emailed people to say what we could do, that Engage4Life would’ve contacted us on several levels. In terms of the amount of time we had to turn that around we couldn’t attend it, and that was a shame because we wanted to grasp any opportunities that there were to get involved”.*

*“..... that may be to do with the speed at which it had to go last year, which is unfortunate to say the least”.*

## **Recruitment of young people to the NCS pilot**

### **5.8 Stakeholder interviews revealed missed opportunities around the recruitment of young people to the pilot.**

5.9 A number of organisations noted their expectation that they would support the NCS pilot by helping with recruitment, either by signposting young people to the programme or directly recruiting young people. The Cabinet Office specification was clear that it expected applicants to demonstrate a strong working relationship with organisations working with young people in Wales in order to achieve

successful recruitment. In the event, despite expectations, this did not happen and all young people were recruited through schools and colleges. There was a sense of disappointment and of a missed opportunity amongst interviewees.

*“The partnership itself informed us that the delivery partner was going to consult with all of us individually about what the requirements would be for the young people to take part. It was hoped then that they would be looking to recruit young people who wouldn’t have the opportunity to go on something like NCS without the involvement of these partner organisations that work with GwirVol..... Two or three weeks before the programme was due to kick off it was confirmed that all of the recruitment had been done via schools providing the opportunity only to young people who were already engaged in mainstream education”.*

*“Not with the actual delivery, I didn’t see any promotional materials for it, I wasn’t contacted directly by Engage4Life directly about promoting it with our...because we’ve obviously got access to 20,000 young people, none of that information came through to me”.*

5.10 The theme of disappointment that recruitment only happened in schools and colleges emerged a number of times through the interviews, particularly when discussing how organisations would like to be involved in any future potential NCS delivery in Wales and whether the NCS pilot in Wales had met its original aims and objectives. The missed opportunities of engaging with the sector as a whole and delivering in an environment that is neither school nor home through only recruiting through schools and colleges was noted.

### **Overall impressions of NCS**

5.11 **All stakeholders agreed that the basic premise of the National Citizen Service was a ‘good idea’ and there was considerable positive feeling about the programme’s central aims and objectives. The stakeholder’s opinions of how the NCS programme had been implemented in Wales and it’s suitability as a programme for Wales were less positive.**

- 5.12 Respondents were asked specifically to reflect on their overall impressions of the NCS pilot in Wales; such reflections also emerged through other questions during the interviews. None of the respondents argued against the basic premise of the National Citizen Service being a 'good idea' and there was considerable positive feeling about the programme's central aims and objectives. Respondents noted that it was a 'good thing to have' and 'there's potential for a programme like NCS' and could see that it could have benefits for young people in Wales.

*"It has the potential to contribute an awful lot, to offer a lot of young people the next step onto something else that they may otherwise not have gained".*

- 5.13 Some respondents noted that the NCS programme was successful in creating a 'buzz' and getting young people engaged i.e. the brand is attractive.
- 5.14 The Swansea University research (unpublished) found that stakeholders from across youth and social action organisations were positive about the aims and ethos of NCS, recognising that its ambitions mapped across shared priorities including youth engagement and community development.
- 5.15 The stakeholder's opinions of how the NCS programme had been implemented in Wales and its suitability as a programme for Wales were influenced by their impressions of the way it was implemented - both the short time-scales involved and the failure to engage sufficiently with organisations in Wales with well established track records in delivering and supporting youth work and volunteering in Wales.
- 5.16 A further concern expressed by some respondents was the perceived short-term nature of programmes such as NCS. Young people in Wales engaged in youth work and volunteering need long-term support, especially those identified as being most vulnerable. This could limit the potential positive impacts of the programme and risk leaving young people without structured follow-up, further support and

signposting more vulnerable than they would have been had they not engaged in the programme at all. A number of stakeholders highlighted the importance of long-term support for any youth work programme.

*“...‘is it a boom you’re in there, it’s a big intervention, and then you’re kind of out of there’? For young people who need most support, for example those young people who might be regarded as at risk through the diagnostic tools around the Youth Engagement and Progression Framework, our concern would be that sort of intervention could be almost worse than useless”.*

### **Overlap between NCS and current youth work and volunteering activities in Wales**

**5.17 A theme that emerged very strongly from the stakeholder interviews was that there is considerable overlap between the NCS programme and what is happening in Wales already. It was not clear from stakeholder interviews how much additionality above what is already provided in the Welsh youth work and volunteering landscape the NCS provides. There are a number of points related to this theme:**

- The need to recognise the wealth of youth work and volunteering opportunities that already exist in Wales.

The introduction to this report highlights just some of the work that currently exists in the voluntary sector in Wales to support young people. There is also a great deal of work that happens in the statutory sector through Local Authority provision. The majority of respondents questioned where and how a future NCS programme in Wales would fit within the current delivery and cautioned against simply “planting” an ‘outside’ programme into the Welsh environment. If the NCS programme were to continue in Wales it would need to understand and consider the current youth work provision and conditions in Wales and work with them. This was heavily acknowledged in the Cabinet Office specification for the contract to deliver the NCS pilot, however the evidence from stakeholders suggests that the level of understanding of

and engagement with organisations operating in this area in Wales was insufficient.

*“...it does feel a little bit like something is being planted on top of what is actually a very well established, diverse, vibrant youth service sector in Wales..... We have a very rich tapestry of organisations, of types of work of types of engagement for young people and it does feel a little bit like the NCS model is just put on top of it”.*

- The risk of complicating an already well established landscape, particularly in relation to offering volunteering opportunities.

A number of respondents warned about the risk of creating complications, with too many organisations and programmes now offering some kind of volunteering opportunities.

*“There is a danger of creating complications. Everyone now wants to have some kind of volunteering offer”.*

- The potential that those organisations in Wales that already exist to deliver any future NCS programme or similar as a co-ordinated effort.

All the organisations interviewed signalled their willingness to engage in a future NCS programme in Wales, through direct delivery or other forms of support, such as recruitment (see section 5.8). The interviews highlighted the importance of recognising the potential that organisations operating in Wales have to deliver a future NCS programme in Wales. These organisations understand the landscape and strategic frameworks in Wales and have the experience and skills to deliver and support youth work programmes. Most organisations acknowledged that working alone they may not have the resources and capacity to deliver NCS, but were very willing to work with other organisations to deliver the programme either as a consortium or in a co-ordinated way.

From the outset it was unclear what additionality NCS would offer to the youth work and volunteering landscape in Wales. The Cabinet

Office specification noted that the delivery of NCS in Wales would be expected to forge strong links with the Welsh Government programmes including Communities First, GwirVol and the Welsh Baccalaureate and with public, private and Third Sector organisations in Wales to deliver the desired programme. However, without a clear picture of how NCS would fit into the existing landscape it is uncertain what outcomes for young people would be over and above what may be already achieved by the range of activities in existence. The evidence gathered from interviews with stakeholders suggests that it is not clear what additionality an NCS programme in Wales would offer over and above the programme of activities already offered by the busy landscape of youth provision in Wales.

- The concern that funding a programme like NCS would take already stretched funds away from those organisations currently delivering youth work and volunteering opportunities in Wales.

Respondents expressed concern that the NCS programme is expensive, and its continuation could take already limited resources away from the work currently being undertaken in Wales. The programme of activities happening in Wales all display elements of the NCS and fit well with the aims of the NCS programme. There was consensus amongst respondents that there is a great deal of potential (and greater efficiency) in using resources allocated to an NCS like scheme to deliver a national youth work product in Wales through a co-ordinated effort across the statutory and voluntary youth work organisations. A number of organisations called for a Welsh branding of any future NCS programme. Respondents also pointed to the sustainability of embedding future NCS delivery within the existing networks, allowing more co-ordinated long-term support for young people.

*“...as far as the programme itself and it’s aims there is nothing wrong with it, it makes sense, but Wales is so small with so few bodies and so little money, there is a fear that if this is given the go ahead, is it going to effect the money*



*that comes to other organisations.....we all have elements of the NCS programme so perhaps the Welsh Government's trick is to have one national youth work product - do we achieve the NCS but in a more sustainable way?"*

*"...it's just making sure that it's not squashing existing initiatives so that funding comes to an end and a new initiative like NCS comes out of the ashes. It's about learning from what's gone before and making sure you are incorporating the best from any programme that's preceded it. Making sure that there is that connectivity with other programmes to avoid duplication and ensure you're getting value for money."*

*"I would see it as part of how youth work is delivered in Wales and I would hope that it would accept that there are already good models of well established youth work that already exists and it could just become part of that process.....the projects in themselves are fine, but they work far better if there is a joined up element to other programmes as well."*

*"There are programmes that many of our members are running that certainly don't cost a thousand pounds per young person. If that money could go that much further, I'm not suggesting that the programme is thrown out completely, I'm saying that there are elements of that programme that can be incorporated into the existing work of organisations and the money could be spread that much further."*

- The need to ensure the delivery of long-term support to young people in Wales.

As outlined above respondents felt that a programme embedded in current Welsh provision could provide a better platform for providing long-term support for youth progression. The need for long-term support to ensure that young people progress along a positive journey was a common theme throughout the interviews. Respondents did not feel that an 'in and out' programme such as NCS would be as beneficial as linking elements of current Welsh provision together to provide long-term support.

This links to another point raised by a number of respondents- the lack of long-term evidence of the impacts of youth work and volunteering on

young people. The majority of organisations interviewed do evaluate their programmes and collect evidence on the impacts of their programmes; but do acknowledge that there is a need for more evidence, particularly on long-term impacts.

A number of respondents noted that they had not seen much evidence of the impacts of the NCS programme. As the NCS programme has not been running for a sufficient period of time to understand its long-term impact it is difficult to say what its legacy will be. Since its inception the benefits of NCS for young people have been measured by a number of studies undertaken by the National Centre for Social Research and Ipsos MORI. The indicators measured have remained largely consistent. The findings from these evaluations show the impact achieved around 3 months after participants have completed NCS. In order to assess whether there is any long-term impact from NCS it is intended that further follow-up surveys will be conducted with NCS participants (and their respective control groups) approximately one, two and three years on from completion of NCS.

- The need to ensure that any future programme would have a Wales focus, and effectively address Welsh language delivery.

A number of organisations noted that they were unsure how much of the NCS pilot programme in Wales was delivered through the medium of Welsh. Some respondents felt that they had been misled in the original (Cabinet Office) commitments to ensure bilingual delivery. One respondent suggested that bringing Welsh and non-Welsh speaking young people together was an important aspect of a Wales specific programme.

*“It needs to be ensured that whatever delivery is available is available through the medium of Welsh.”*

- The potential overlaps with the Welsh Baccalaureate in Wales.

The majority of respondents referred, without prompting, to the Welsh Baccalaureate in Wales during the course of their interview. Others discussed it after prompting.

Respondents acknowledged that the NCS programme shared many similarities with the Welsh Bacc in Wales, especially in its revised form. The key aims of NCS align well with those within the community participation element of the Welsh Bacc:

- develop awareness of what it means to be an active and responsible citizen through helping others;
- provide opportunities for candidates to involve themselves in working in active community participation, it cannot be desk based;
- relate to the real world and the wider community, outside the classroom;
- encourage candidates to work in groups.

Several respondents questioned the need for a programme such as NCS when to a large extent the Welsh Bacc covers the same ground. These respondents saw the Welsh Bacc as Wales's version of NCS and thought that there was no real need to add in an expensive programme that would largely repeat elements of the Welsh Bacc.

However, most respondents who discussed the Welsh Bacc acknowledged the overlaps with NCS but envisaged a more synergistic role for both programmes. While the Welsh Bacc has many similarities to the NCS programme there are elements that NCS can deliver that the Welsh Bacc does not and vice versa.

Respondents recommended that any future NCS programme in Wales is closely linked with the Welsh Bacc to maximise the benefits from both and to avoid duplication. Accreditation and evidence gained via youth work and volunteering can already be used as evidence for the Welsh Bacc, but respondents noted that there was greater potential still for this to happen. As previously noted respondents recognised that an NCS programme in Wales could be a co-ordinated effort with a number of different organisations, including the Welsh Bacc, combining to provide young people in Wales with a national youth work offer.

There are a number of elements of the NCS that are not covered by the Welsh Bacc. For example, the NCS aim to ensure a social mix of participants to improve how they feel towards people from different backgrounds to them is more difficult to achieve as all Welsh Bacc participants are based in a school or college setting. The Welsh Bacc does not contain a residential element. While recruitment for NCS should aim to capture young people not already engaged in education or training, the Welsh Bacc is aimed at young people already in education who may also have easier access to other youth work and volunteering offers.

**Did the NCS pilot achieve its aims and objectives?**

- 5.18 **The central theme that emerged is that respondents felt that the way the NCS pilot was delivered in Wales did not meet the original criteria set out in the Cabinet Office specification.**
- 5.19 Stakeholders were asked whether in their opinion the NCS Pilot achieved its objectives. A number of respondents did not feel able to comment on whether the NCS pilot in Wales had achieved its aims and objectives as they did not know enough about what they were. Others clarified that their responses were based on personal opinion, the views of people they had spoken to in their member organisations and anecdotal evidence. Several commented that they hadn't heard anything about the outcomes of the pilot, but would be interested to see such information.
- 5.20 The stakeholders interviewed did not comment specifically on whether participants had experienced positive outcomes in transition to adulthood, teamwork, communication and leadership and community involvement. However a number noted that verbal feedback from participants indicated that they had enjoyed their experiences, were enthusiastic and positively engaged. Only one respondent noted that they felt that the confidence and aspiration of those that attended had been boosted.

*“The young people had fun; they had a fantastic time...”*

- 5.21 The overall aim of the NCS programme is to bring together young people from different backgrounds to help them develop greater confidence, self-awareness and responsibility, with a view to creating a more cohesive, responsible and engaged society.
- 5.22 Its four key outcome areas are social mixing, transition to adulthood, teamwork, communication and leadership and community involvement. A distinction needs to be made between the high-level aims and objectives of the NCS programme and those aims and objectives contained within the Cabinet Office specification for the NCS pilot in Wales about how the pilot should be delivered in Wales. The outcome areas are the same for the NCS pilot in Wales, but there are several specific components in the specification for Wales that drew comments from respondents. The central theme that emerged is that respondents felt that the way the NCS pilot was delivered in Wales did not meet the original criteria set out in the specification. The key areas of emphasis where there was felt to be discrepancy between intention and outcomes were:
- The active involvement of a number of Communities First Clusters in the development and delivery of NCS in Wales.
  - That the social mix of the programme achieved the right balance between ensuring a measurable geographical, economic and social mix of participants. Applicants are asked to consider a mix of urban and rural areas, town and country areas and smaller villages to cover all of Wales.
  - That Applicants should demonstrate a strong working relationship with organisations working with young people in Wales in order to achieve successful recruitment.

The NCS pilot in Wales was delivered in Communities First Clusters only as specified, however delivery only occurred in South Wales. The delivery organisation did involve Communities First youth workers in the delivery of the programme in these areas, although did not recruit through Communities First Clusters. Research participants were

disappointed that the programme was only delivered in urban areas in South Wales. Respondents also had difficulty in identifying how the element of social mixing could have been effectively achieved given the limited geographical scope and the focus on Communities First wards. A number felt that only focussing delivery of such programmes on young people in disadvantaged areas meant that the desired social mixing did not happen. The potential risk that mixing young people at risk of disengagement only with others at the same risk could create a downward spiral was also highlighted. It also missed the opportunity to work with others who would greatly benefit from such a programme, but who don't live in Communities First areas.

While the specification indicated that that young people should be recruited through a range of channels in Wales by working with existing organisations, this did not happen and recruitment happened through schools alone. This was felt to be a big missed opportunity in ensuring a better social mix, ensuring that the programme captured those that didn't already have access to such opportunities, and ensuring that relationships were built with existing organisations in Wales so that the pilot could potentially have a longer-term impact through continued support and sign-posting.

*"..... people do need to mix with each other. We can't go through life just having a programme for Communities First. There are some areas in Wales with poverty, with problems, but they don't come under the category of Communities First. Young people need to network and to know what's available and get to know people outside their own areas. I think we need to give more attention to the meaning of 'social mix'".*

*"...other young people can also benefit enormously from youth work interventions ..... there is a bit of a risk that if young people in Wales who are at risk of disengagement are always in programmes and projects with other young people at risk of disengagement you risk creating a bit of a downward spiral. That isn't always the best way to raise aspirations. If you can bring*

*young people from different backgrounds together it can make a huge difference to young people who have been more fortunate and more privileged because they can learn about the reality of life for other people, and it also raise the expectations and aspirations of young people who face more challenges”.*

*“they didn’t manage to link in to all of those other packages outside of school- so they came from school, did the programme, went back to school. Whereas if it had been a much wider ranging group of organisations that they’d engaged with some of those young people might have gone on to other interventions or support packages from where they’d come in from somewhere but might have been going on somewhere else afterwards. It might have had a bigger impact”.*

- That Applicants needed to be able to demonstrate a sound knowledge of the socio-economic characteristics of Wales, the youth sector, educational and volunteering landscape of Wales and be able to demonstrate a strong partnership approach, making use of, and working with public, private and Third Sector organisations in Wales to deliver the desired programme.

As previously noted in section 5.7 respondents felt that they were not sufficiently engaged in the NCS pilot, some expectations they had were not met and this was a missed opportunity.

A number of respondents reflected on the need to look at the long-term impact of NCS to ensure that short-term benefits are maintained. They pointed to the need to ensure long-term post participation support to young people and were concerned that without this, while a programme such as NCS may achieve positive outcomes in the short-term, these gains would not be sustained.

## **Future involvement in NCS**

**5.23 There was a positive consensus that the organisations interviewed would want to be involved in facilitating any future NCS like programme in a variety of ways.**

5.24 The majority of respondents felt that there was future potential for an NCS like programme in Wales, but this was caveated with a number of concerns. First and foremost any future scheme should recognise and integrate the youth work already existing in Wales and build on the experience and expertise that can be offered. This would involve ensuring that the contribution that complementary work in Wales such as the Welsh Baccalaureate and Millennium Volunteers can make is fully considered and incorporated. One of the recommendations in the Swansea University evaluation (unpublished) reinforces this message.

*“Integration with the Millennium Volunteers award scheme should be sought as a key feature of future Wales NCS activity. The strong foundation in Wales for volunteer support, together with the prospect of both award attainment and transition into ongoing volunteering is an opportunity that should not be missed.”* Swansea University evaluation (unpublished).

5.25 Respondents were concerned about conflicts around funding if already stretched resources were allocated to a ‘new’ programme. Respondents felt that any future NCS like programme should have a strong Welsh cultural context and adequately incorporate the Welsh language.

5.26 Those interviewed were asked if the NCS Programme were to continue what role or engagement did they envisage for their organisation. There was positive consensus that the organisations interviewed would want to be involved in facilitating any future NCS like programme in a variety of ways. At the least the majority of organisations wanted to be involved in any initial discussions about future NCS involvement. The majority also indicated their willingness to champion a future NCS in Wales and actively promote it. A number of organisations would want to be directly involved in the recruitment of young people into such a programme. Many respondents expressed disappointment that they had not been involved in recruitment for the pilot and therefore welcomed any opportunity to be engaged in this way in any future programme. Those organisations



who act as representatives were keen to provide information about and signpost any future programme to their member organisations.

*‘...we could be one of the local go-to organisations that the programme engages with. So we’d become champions if you like for that programme within that area’.*

*“I’m sure there would be young people from our organisation we could’ve pushed forward but we weren’t part of the discussions around targeting people. We would welcome being part of it...”*

5.27 A number of respondents also clearly indicated their willingness to directly deliver a future NCS programme. Despite the Wales consortium bid being unsuccessful in winning the contract to deliver the NCS pilot in Wales there was interest among respondents in delivering a NCS type programme in Wales. However, it was clear that no single organisation believed it had all the capacity and expertise needed to deliver NCS in Wales, rather it should be a collaboration between a number of different organisations in Wales who collectively have the experience, resources and skills (e.g. trained youth workers) to successfully deliver such a programme. Some respondents also noted that there was potential to deliver the core aims and activities of an NCS programme by co-ordinating it across a number of different initiatives already being delivered in Wales.

*“Well we definitely would be interested in looking at the delivery element...”*

*“If there were opportunities to deliver NCS or to work with a consortium group of partners who would be delivering, whether it’s the model that exists at the moment or an enhanced model based on what we’ve learned from the evaluation. I think that would present some opportunities ..... and other partners to make sure that people who need that programme the most have access to it. .... A diverse dynamic is always a positive thing in my experience; and the same thing a diverse group of consortium partners”.*

## **Youth Progression**

**5.28 There was consensus amongst stakeholders around what progression should mean for young people in Wales.**

5.29 Research participants were asked how the work of their organisation contributes to the progression of young people. The majority of respondents noted, without prompting, the Youth Engagement and Progression Framework and the Youth Work Strategy (see section 3) in their response to this and other questions. Respondents clearly see the role that their organisations' work plays in the key elements of the Framework and Strategy. There was consensus around what progression should mean for young people in Wales- improving the aspirations and confidence of all young people, especially those most vulnerable and dis-engaged; improve the education, skills, training and employability of young people; the personal and social development of young people; taking young people on a journey towards more positive outcomes; connecting young people with their communities and helping them to help address community needs. Respondents felt that the aims of the NCS programme accord well with the aims of youth progression in Wales and that they were well placed within their organisations to take forward these aims.

## **Results from survey of teachers from participating schools**

5.30 To gather the views of teachers on the NCS programme a survey was sent to the lead contact(s) in the 15 schools and colleges whose students participated in the NCS pilot in Wales (contact details provided by the delivery organisation Engage4Life). Fifteen surveys were sent out, and seven responses received. It is not possible to provide a response rate as recipients were asked to cascade the survey to relevant colleagues within their organisations, therefore the final number of people who received the survey is unknown. The survey contained a mix of open and closed questions. As the original population for the survey was small, the results of the survey are not robust and can only provide a snapshot of the views of those people

who have a role in supporting the young people that attended the NCS pilot in Wales. Most of the time actual numbers, rather than percentages are reported due to the small size of the population.

5.31 Respondents were asked to detail how they had heard about the NCS pilot in Wales. In all cases respondents were approached directly by the delivery organisation, Engage4Life, about providing their students with the opportunity to participate in the NCS pilot. Respondents were asked how they encouraged or selected pupils to participate in the NCS Pilot. A range of different ways of selecting pupils to participate was described:

- Year 11 all offered the opportunity. Some 6th formers offered, primarily those that receive free school meals or have difficulties with social skills.
- Pupils studying AS levels given the opportunity to participate after Engage4Life attended school to talk to AS tutorial groups (groups selected as tutorials occurred on days Engage4Life available to attend school).
- Voluntary opportunity.
- Through an assembly.
- Engage4Life invited to pitch at our freshers fayre.
- Rewarded pupils who achieved their GCSE Maths in year 10 and also selected boys who needed motivating.
- *“At KS4 the Learning Leader and I made offers to all pupils working in our Learning Support Centre (vulnerable and underperforming pupils). These include all pupils requiring a bespoke programme of support due to learning, pastoral or social difficulties. At KS5 the Welsh Baccalaureate groups received the offer as we believed it would significantly support their work”.*

5.32 Respondents were asked whether they had faced any challenges recruiting pupils to participate in the NCS Pilot. Three said they had

faced challenges. Two of those noted that the short time between recruitment and the beginning of the programme was problematic, in one case leading some pupils having to decline the offer. Two respondents noted that there was conflict between the timing of the programme and exam revision days and exam periods. One respondent noted that the perceptions of some pupils about the physical challenges they may face during the programme held them back.

- 5.33 Respondents were asked whether they were aware of any difficulties faced by their pupils during their participation in the NCS Pilot. Only two respondents said they were aware of difficulties faced by their pupils during participation. One referred to the behaviour of some participants (although did not elaborate on this behaviour) and another noted difficulties in understanding the system for the pre meetings/ venues etc. given that a high proportion were from non-English speaking backgrounds.
- 5.34 Respondents were asked to select from a multi-select list of options asking before and after participating in the NCS Pilot what benefits did they think it may and did bring to pupils. The graph below shows the perceptions of teachers of the benefits for pupils of the NCS pilot in Wales before and after participation. The graph shows that the four most important benefits selected were: improved confidence generally, improved ability to work in teams, the development of useful and applicable skills and improved aspiration for what they can achieve. For the first three benefits the actual benefits that teachers believed pupils had achieved after participating match quite closely to the perceived benefits. However, only 57% of respondents felt that pupils had an improved aspiration for what they can achieve as opposed to 86% who perceived it as a benefit. The lowest scores for both perceived and achieved benefit were for improved resilience, improved behaviour generally and improved attitude towards the local community.

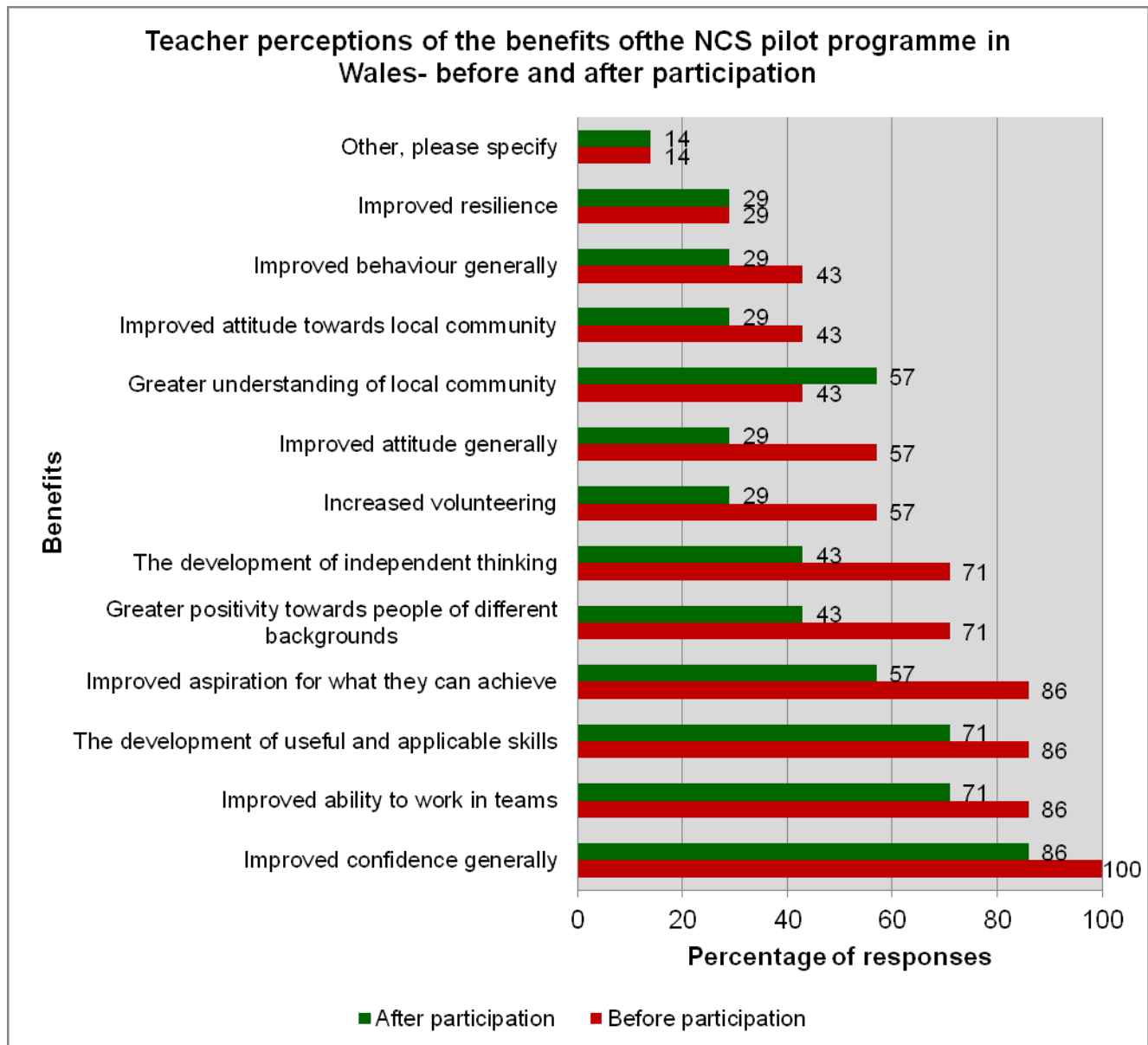


Figure 3: Teacher perceptions of the benefits of the NCS pilot programme in Wales- before and after participation (base:7).

5.35 Respondents were then asked to what extent they agreed with a range of statements related to the promotion, design and delivery of the NCS pilot in Wales. The graph below displays the results of these questions (by number of respondents). It shows that respondents did not agree that the NCS pilot was effectively promoted by the Welsh Government, but were more satisfied with how it had been promoted by Engage4Life. Respondents agreed that the NCS pilot had been effectively designed and delivered. Three respondents made further comments on the design and delivery of the NCS. Two commented

on the need for better communication with the delivery organisation, before, during and after the programme. One respondent commented on how much the experienced was enjoyed by students.

*“I have heard nothing from the organisers since the trip and was promised pictures etc.”*

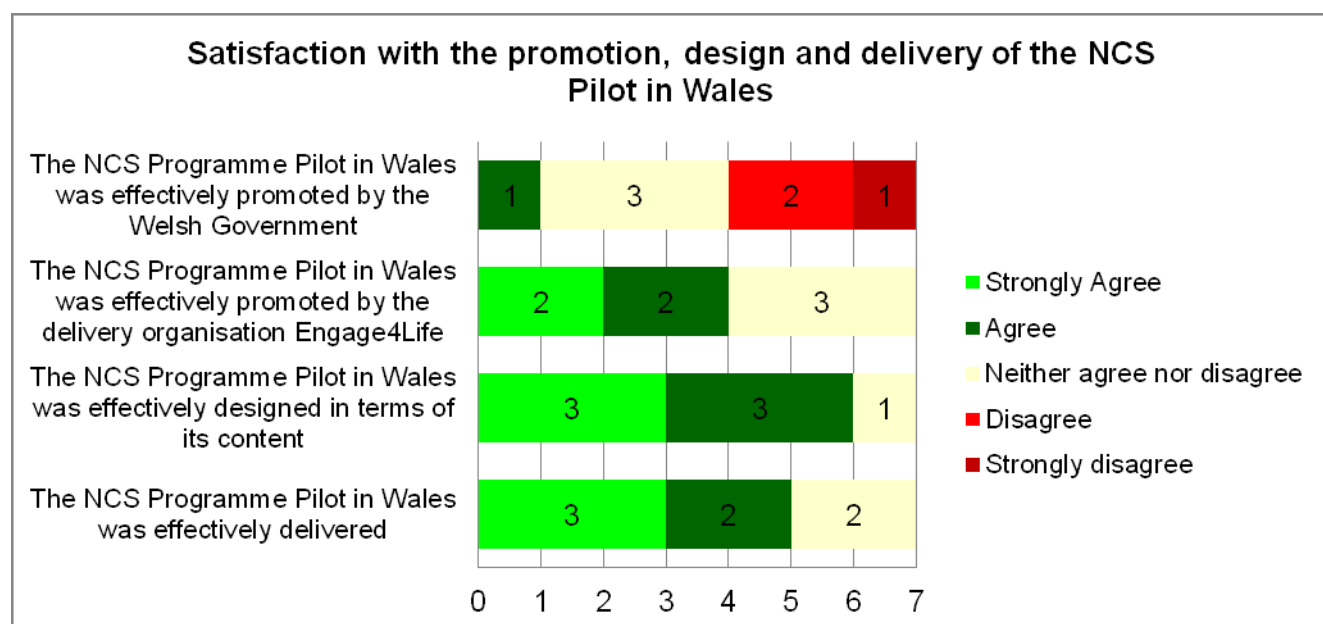


Figure 4: Satisfaction with the promotion, design and delivery of the NCS Pilot in Wales (base:7)

5.36 Respondents were asked to what extent they felt that the NCS programme fits well with wider educational goals in Wales and shares similarities with other volunteering schemes/mechanisms in Wales. All respondents agreed that the NCS programme fits well with wider educational goals in Wales, but there was less certainty around whether the NCS shares similarities with other volunteering schemes or mechanisms in Wales. Two further comments were received about the integration of NCS:

*“I believe the aims and aspirations of the NCS reflect the aspirational aims of both the Welsh Baccalaureate and Duke of Edinburgh programmes. With small amendments closer collaboration would be successful.”*

*“They can link the volunteering hours to the MV50 [Millennium Volunteers] programme or similar programmes.....”*

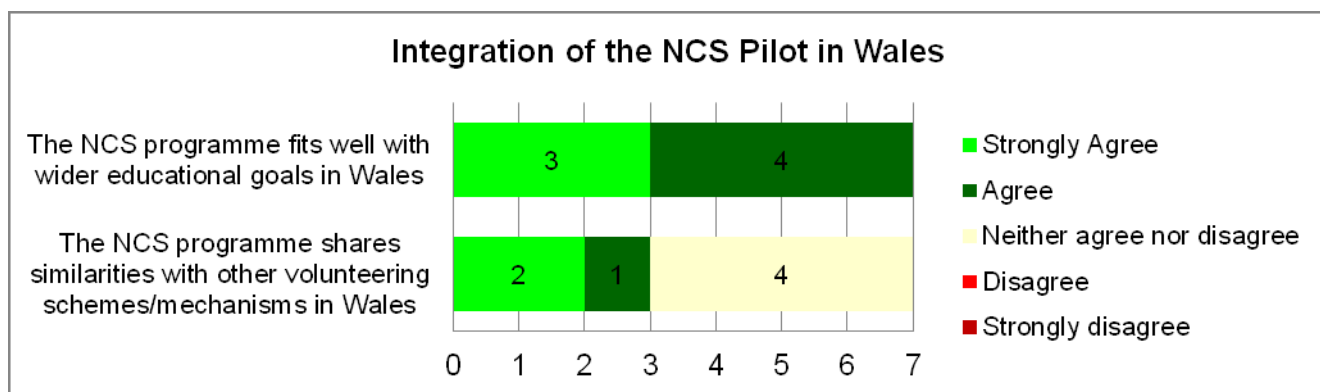


Figure 5: Integration of the NCS Pilot in Wales (base:7).

5.37 Six out of seven respondents felt that the continuation of the goals of the NCS programme would be beneficial for young people in Wales, one responded 'don't know'. Respondents were then asked to rank four key aims of the NCS programme in order of importance- cohesion, responsibility, engagement with communities and social mixing. Cohesion received the highest mean ranking of 3.5, followed by social mixing- 2.67, responsibility- 2.17 and engagement with communities- 1.67 (base: 6).

5.38 Two further comments made by respondents were:

*"This programme has come about at the right time. Schools and pupils are under a great amount of pressure to raise standards of learning and as a result some of the "fun" of going to school is being left out! The programme offers students the opportunities that were once offered in schools to engage socially and practically in activities designed to encourage teamwork, improving own learning (the old key skills) I am in full support of this programme and would like to thank everyone involved for allowing our school to take part."*

*"Engage 4 Life staff were positive, encouraging and motivating. However, there must be a greater respect for the schools expectations on behaviour and smoking."*

[The contract manager will indicate whether recommendations are required at the inception meeting. Where recommendations are required there should be a clear link from findings to conclusions then from conclusions to recommendations.

**Summary of results from the NatCen for Social Research (2012, 2013) and Ipsos MORI (2013) evaluations, including observations from Swansea University evaluation (unpublished).**

5.39 Previous evaluations of the impact of NCS on participants have measured to what extent NCS schemes have had an impact on the four key outcome areas. Four evaluations have been undertaken to date: an evaluation of the 2011 pilot NCS programme and an evaluation of summer and autumn participation in the 2012 NCS (NatCen Social Research, May 2012 and July 2013); evaluation of the 2013 and 2014 summer and autumn NCS cohorts, including the Wales 2014 NCS pilot (Ipsos Ipsos MORI August 2014 and to be published). Data from the 2014 Ipsos MORI research is not contained in this draft report as its publication has been delayed. The 2012, 13 and 14 evaluations estimated the impact of the programme by collecting data from NCS participants and from a contemporaneous matched comparison sample of 16 year-olds who did not take part in the programme. The same questions measuring key outcomes were asked of both summer and autumn samples in 2012 and 2013, but there are some differences in the actual questions asked under each key theme between the NatCen and Ipsos MORI reports. Outcomes before and after the programme for the NCS participants were then compared to those of the comparison sample. The outcomes of the comparison sample represent the best estimate of the outcomes for the NCS participants had they not taken part in NCS – that is, their counterfactual outcomes. Comparing participants' outcomes with the counterfactual provides estimates of the independent impact of participation in NCS.

5.40 Both evaluations included an impact study aimed to assess the independent impacts of the NCS programme through a before and



after survey with NCS participants in Summer and Autumn. Both also aimed to assess the value for money of NCS.

- 5.41 As well as measuring the experiences of participants, a number of indicators were measured under each of the four impact areas: social mixing, transition to adulthood, teamwork, communication and leadership and community involvement.
- 5.42 Further evaluation of the summer and autumn 2014 cohorts of NCS participants was undertaken by Ipsos MORI, and this includes some data on the participants in the Wales pilot. However, the data from the Wales level survey has not been included in this report as the response rate was too low to provide any meaningful data and no significance testing could be undertaken.
- 5.43 The following section provides a short summary of the results on participant experiences and impact areas from the 2012 and 2013 evaluations. It also includes some observations on participant experiences from the Swansea University evaluation based on qualitative interviews with participants.
- 5.44 The 2012 evaluation (NatCen) shows that participants in summer and autumn programmes were overwhelmingly positive about their experience, with almost all (88% summer, 86% autumn) young people surveyed saying they would definitely recommend NCS to a friend. The 2013 evaluation showed that nine in ten (90% summer, 87% autumn) said they would definitely recommend it to others. The Swansea University study found that the majority of participants reported signing up for the programme because the content looked appealing, inspiring and interesting. Other reasons for participating given were: the opportunity for social integration and meeting new people, the opportunity for personal development such as improving confidence and skills, the opportunity to have new experiences and participants appreciated the benefits to employment and further education applications.

#### *Social mixing*

- 5.45 The 2012 evaluation showed no statistically significant positive impacts were found on the measures relating to changing attitudes towards people from different backgrounds. Qualitative evidence suggested that NCS did impact some individuals' views to social mixing. Having to mix with others was also felt to have had a positive effect on teamwork and communication, if not directly on views of people from different backgrounds. Ninety-five per cent of young people said that during NCS they met people they would not normally mix with and over 80% said they felt more positive towards people from different backgrounds following NCS.
- 5.46 There were some differences in the questions used to measure this outcome area between the 2012 and 2013 evaluations. The 2013 evaluation showed that NCS had a positive impact on participants' willingness to trust other people and on measures of attitudes of mixing with people from different backgrounds. However the evaluation found that while NCS had led to those who already mixed socially with different groups to do this more often, it has not been found to move young people from have no contact to having some contact with these groups<sup>1</sup>.

*Transition to adulthood*

- 5.47 In relation to life skills, NCS 2012 was found to have a significant impact on the proportion reporting that they are "good at having a go at things that are new to me". Qualitative interviews suggested that specific activities that took place as part of NCS encouraged the development of life skills and helped young people become aware of more opportunities for the future. In particular, engaging in these activities in a supportive environment was seen to give young people more confidence in trying new things. NCS was also felt to provide something useful to add to young people's CV and open up opportunities to do more volunteering or work experience that could lead to paid work in the future.

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<sup>1</sup> From a richer or poorer background, from a different school or college, who are gay and lesbian, of retirement age, who are disabled.

- 5.48 The 2013 evaluation showed that positive impacts were found across several aspects of the transition to adulthood outcome area. There were positive impacts on participants' short and long-term educational and career aspirations, NCS increased participants' confidence in practical life skills, such as decision-making and managing money, improved willingness to try new things and resilience when things go wrong.
- 5.49 Swansea University's evaluation also found that participants reported NCS as having positively affected their views towards progressing towards qualifications and/or making firmer career plans.
- 5.50 Evidence from participant interviews suggested that the Wales 2014 NCS pilot provided 'inspiration' to the majority of participants, especially through the guest speakers. Personal development was also a strong theme with many citing positive changes in confidence, consideration of others and maturity. Many discussed a renewed determination to succeed in school and college in order to enter their chosen career successfully. This included not only perspectives of those with higher education aspirations for graduate careers, but also a range of vocational routes through FE and apprenticeships. A number of participants acknowledged that they had discovered new entrepreneurial perspectives about the future, such as career possibilities and the reality of owning their own business (Swansea University, 2015, unpublished).

*Teamwork, communication and leadership*

- 5.51 The 2012 evaluation found that the most significant impacts of NCS were on young people's teamwork, communication and leadership skills, with statistically significant impacts seen in all areas. Qualitative interviews suggest that the programme design and the progressive nature of the programme have a positive influence on impacts in this area. Firstly, the programme requires participants to test and develop their communication skills with other young people before doing so with adults they know and, finally, wider community stakeholders.

Secondly, participants described how the residential elements took them out of their comfort zone, requiring them to work with people they did not know but in an environment that they felt was supportive. Finally, participants were required to take on leadership roles and reflect on their own styles within the supportive framework of their NCS team.

- 5.52 The 2013 evaluation also showed that the positive impacts on how participants approached leadership and communication were some of the strongest seen across all outcome areas. NCS improved participants' confidence in leading and working in a team, and in putting forward and explaining new ideas to others.
- 5.53 The Swansea University evaluation asked participants whether the programme had changed any of their views about teamwork. The majority stated that positive changes had taken place when it came to working with others. Many reported seeing the benefits and importance of teamwork. This was followed by a desire to achieve and mainly attributed to the influence of the guest speakers. A number of participants reported positive personal development had occurred including changes in behaviour, consideration and perception of others.

### *Community Involvement*

- 5.54 The 2012 evaluation showed that the summer programme was associated with two impacts in the area of community involvement- a positive impact in relation to helping out in future and in relation to local influence. Over 70% of participants felt they were more likely to help out in the local community because of NCS and over 60% of participants reported feeling more responsibility to the local community following NCS.
- 5.55 The 2013 evaluation found that NCS had several positive impacts on attitudes and behaviours around community involvement, some of the most consistent observed across all outcome areas. There were improvements in: how much participants felt they knew about how to

get involved in their local communities and how to tackle local problems; how much influence participants felt they had when getting involved and whether they felt capable of being involved; and participants' actual community engagement.

- 5.56 The majority of participants in the Wales NCS Pilot reported that the programme had increased their awareness of their community, its issues and needs, and the importance of engagement with authority and others. A smaller number of participants stated that the programme had not changed their views about community involvement. A third theme to emerge was an increased belief in making a positive difference to their communities (Swansea University, 2015, unpublished).

## **6. Recommendations**

- 6.1 In making the following recommendations, the limitations presented by the resource available for this study and the limited nature of the data available on the actual delivery, participant experiences and views of wider stakeholders such as parents and teachers must be taken into account. Whilst offering some important headline messages, this study does not provide a full account of the Welsh NCS pilot.
- 6.2 Recommendation 1: Alternative methods of delivering elements of the NCS model in Wales should be carefully considered. While there was agreement that the NCS model was a positive offering for young people in Wales and many of the aspects of the NCS model fit well with and overlap with youth work and volunteering opportunities already being offered by the Welsh Baccalaureate and other organisations in Wales, no one initiative alone offers all the aspects of the NCS model in one package (see recommendation 2).
- 6.3 Recommendation 2: Future initiatives should recognise and integrate the youth work already existing in Wales and build on the experience and expertise that can be offered. All the organisations interviewed signalled their willingness to engage in a future NCS programme in Wales, through direct delivery or other forms of support, such as recruitment. Those interviewed highlighted the importance of recognising the potential that organisations operating in Wales have to deliver a future NCS programme in Wales. These organisations understand the landscape and strategic frameworks in Wales and have the experience and skills to deliver and support youth work programmes. Most organisations acknowledged that working alone they may not have the resources and capacity to deliver NCS, but were very willing to work with other organisations to deliver an NCS like model either as a consortium or in a co-ordinated way ensuring that different ways of accreditation are more joined-up.
- 6.4 Recommendation 3: Whatever decision is made as to the future

delivery of the NCS in Wales (for example a full NCS model or a revised Welsh model) should ensure that it does not repeat the missed opportunities highlighted in this report; specifically engaging with all relevant stakeholders (see recommendations 4 and 6) and ensuring recruitment does not only take place in a school setting (see recommendation 5).

- 6.5 Recommendation 4: Much of the lack of engagement with relevant stakeholders was a result of the constrained time period in which to deliver the programme, therefore future considerations for delivery should ensure that sufficient time is built into the delivery to ensure effective engagement with all relevant organisations.
- 6.6 Recommendation 5: Future youth engagement and volunteering programmes in Wales should consider the importance of ensuring that recruitment does occur outside a school setting and engage with the sector as a whole to ensure all young people are offered the opportunity to engage.
- 6.7 Recommendation 6: Future youth engagement and volunteering programmes in Wales should engage with the key volunteering resource of Community Voluntary Councils to successfully fulfil the community service/volunteering aspect of the programme. This also has implications for the volunteering aspect of the new Welsh Baccalaureate as concerns were expressed about the capacity of the sector to support the volunteering demands of the revised Welsh Baccalaureate.
- 6.8 Recommendation 8: Whatever decision is made as to the future delivery of the NCS in Wales it should have a strong Welsh cultural context and adequately incorporate the Welsh language.
- 6.9 Recommendation 7: The NCS Wales pilot successfully created attractive branding and 'buzz'. Welsh organisations could work together to create a 'buzz' around what is already happening in Wales or potentially create a programme that is 'NCS Wales' with the same levels of branding and engagement.

- 6.10 Recommendation 9: There is a need to ensure long-term post participation support to young people in order to sustain short-term gains. While a programme such as NCS may achieve positive outcomes in the short-term, these gains may not be sustained. The NCS model could provide an effective platform for next steps for young people onto some of the other youth work and volunteering opportunities in Wales and internationally if co-ordinated appropriately in terms of recruitment, delivery and further signposting and support.
- 6.11 Recommendation 10: Further consideration of how to deliver elements of the NCS programme in Wales must consider the concern that the NCS programme is expensive, and its continuation could take already limited resources away from the work currently being done in Wales.
- 6.12 Recommendation 11: It was acknowledged that while some evaluation of the impacts of youth work and volunteering is undertaken, there is room for improvement in the long-term evaluation of the impacts of such initiatives for young people. Future delivery of youth engagement and volunteering programmes in Wales should consider both baseline and long-term evaluation needs. Careful consideration should be given to collecting monitoring data that allow the outcomes of any NCS type initiative to be properly assessed.
- 6.13 Recommendation 12: Any future variant of NCS should set out clearly where it provides additionality over and clear relationships with existing frameworks, programmes and initiatives working towards similar outcomes.



## **References**

Booth, C. et al., 2014. 'National Citizens Service 2013 Evaluation', Ipsos MORI, August 2014.

Brown, A. et al., 2013 'Evaluation of National Citizens Service: Findings from the evaluations of the 2012 summer and autumn NCS programmes', NatCen Social Research, July 2013.

## **Annex A**

### **Stakeholder interview questions**

#### **Background**

1. Please could you begin by telling me a little about your organisation and your role?
2. What are the key challenges facing your organisation?

#### **The NCS Programme**

1. Were you engaged with the NCS Programme in any way?

If yes:

- 1a. If yes, what was your involvement?
2. In your opinion did the NCS Pilot achieve its objectives?
3. Do you feel that you/your organisation were sufficiently engaged by the NCS delivery organisation (Engage4Life)?
4. Did you face any challenges in you engagement with the NCS Pilot?
5. What is your overall impression of the NCS Programme?
6. If the NCS Programme were to continue, what role would you envisage it having in Wales?
7. If the NCS Programme were to continue what role/engagement with it do you envisage for your organisation?
8. What lessons can be learned from the NCS pilot in Wales?

If No:

1. If no, are you aware of the NCS Programme?
2. Were there at any point opportunities for you to engage with NCS?
3. If yes, why were these opportunities not realised?

#### **Integration**

Ask for both yes and no:

1. How well do you think NCS fits with other initiatives in Wales?

2. How do you think NCS fits with wider educational and youth development goals in Wales?
3. Are there any points of similarity/contention between NCS and your organisation's goals/priorities?
4. What lessons can be learned from the NCS pilot in Wales?
5. How could the NCS programme be enhanced by the overall approach to young people and volunteering being taken in Wales?
6. Do you have any other observations you would like to make about the NCS Programme in Wales?

## **Annex B**

### **Participating schools teacher survey**

1. Did pupils from your school participate in the NCS Pilot in Wales?  
Yes/No
2. How did you hear about NCS?
3. How did you encourage/select pupils to participate in the NCS Pilot?
4. Did you face any challenges recruiting pupils to participate in the NCS Pilot? Yes/No
5. If yes, what were the challenges that you faced recruiting pupils in the NCS Pilot?
6. Are you aware of any difficulties faced by your pupils during their participation in the NCS Pilot? Yes/No
7. If yes, what were the difficulties or challenges faced by your pupils during their participation in the NCS Pilot?
8. Before participating in the NCS Pilot what benefits did you think it may bring to pupils? Please tick all that apply

Improved attitude generally

Improved behaviour generally

Improved aspiration for what they can achieve

Improved confidence generally

Improved resilience

The development of independent thinking

The development of useful and applicable skills

Improved ability to work in teams

Greater positivity towards people of different backgrounds

Improved attitude towards local community

Greater understanding of local community

Increased volunteering

Other, please specify

9. Reflecting on the period during and after your pupils' participation in the NCS Pilot, which of the following benefits do you think the programme had? Please tick all that apply

Improved attitude  
Improved behaviour  
Improved aspiration  
Improved confidence  
Improved resilience  
The development of independent thinking  
The development of useful and applicable skills  
Improved ability to work in teams  
Greater positivity towards people of different backgrounds  
Improved attitude towards local community  
Greater understanding of local community  
Increased volunteering  
Other, please specify

10. If you have any other comments on the benefits of NCS for your pupils, please state them here:

11. If you have feedback on any particular activity that your pupils undertook, please state here:

12. To what extent do you agree/disagree with the following statements?

The NCS Programme Pilot in Wales was effectively promoted by the Welsh Government

The NCS Programme Pilot in Wales was effectively promoted by the delivery organisation Engage4Life

The NCS Programme Pilot in Wales was effectively designed in terms of its content

The NCS Programme Pilot in Wales was effectively delivered

13. If you have any comments on the design and delivery of the NCS Programme in Wales please state them here:

### **Integration**

The Welsh Government supports a number of its own programmes designed to promote youth engagement and voluntary action in Wales. It was envisaged that the NCS pilot for Wales was integrated with and worked alongside the Welsh Government's programmes where possible.

14. To what extent do you agree/disagree with the following statements?

The NCS programme fits well with wider educational goals in Wales?  
The NCS programme shares similarities with other volunteering schemes/mechanisms in Wales?

15. If you have any observations on how the NCS programme fits into the wider picture of youth volunteering and education in Wales, please state them here:

16. Would the continuation of the goals of the NCS programme be beneficial for young people in Wales? Yes/No

17. If yes, which is the most important of those goals (please rank in order of importance)?

Cohesion.

Responsibility.

Engagement with communities.

Social mixing

If you have any other comments you would like to make about the NCS Programme please state them here: